

# Assisting Constituents in the 11<sup>th</sup> Congressional District

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## Conservation Technical Assistance

### Application for RC&D Program

NRCS staff assisted the Urban Conservation Action Partnership (UCAP) Board of Directors in preparation of the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) application for Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Passaic counties. The region is the last area in New Jersey to seek RC&D Council status. Approval by the Secretary of Agriculture would increase NRCS assistance in areas such as community development, urban-rural interface, greenway and open space preservation, urban natural resource conservation, and outreach to the residents, who number more than 2 million, in the region.

### Greenway Developing along Rockaway River

Another 300 feet of greenway trail has been completed along the Rockaway River in Dover, with technical assistance from NRCS. The trail creation involves hundreds of volunteers on as many as 15 volunteer days per year. The job involves everything from removing tons of trash and debris, trimming and pruning the existing trees, clearing the trailway, laying woodchips and rocks to line the path, to installing benches and tables. The volunteers have now completed over 1,200 feet of trail in three years. This final year will see the installation of fencing and the final stretch of trail to connect the greenway to a local playground.

### Patriots' Path Grant to Provide for Morristown Recreation

NRCS provided assistance to the Morristown Planning Board as they worked towards completing the Patriots' Path grant. The grant provides funding to expand the existing path from Speedwell Lake to Abbet Avenue playground. Upon completion of the path, residents can enjoy bike riding, jogging, walking, and fishing along the path.

### Whippany River Watershed Municipalities Receive Information

NRCS and the Urban Conservation Action Partnership continue to distribute *A Cleaner Whippany River Watershed: Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Guidance Manual for Municipal Officials, Engineers and Departments of Public Works*, developed by NRCS in conjunction with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Copies of the manual have been distributed to over 100 municipal officials over the course of the year.

### Conservation Education and Outreach

All members of the New Jersey Conservation Partnership are actively engaged in public education and outreach. Conservation education and direct assistance to the public are ongoing priorities in your Congressional District and throughout the state.

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## **Soil Survey Program**

### **Sussex County Soil Survey Update Complete**

NRCS soil scientists completed mapping for the Sussex County Soil Survey update in 2001. A total of 22,686 acres were surveyed. One major difference between the new Sussex update and the previous soil surveys, the last published in 1975, is that “Urban land” is named as a map unit. The urban map units were interpreted directly from aerial photography. In January 2002, the Sussex County Soil Conservation District gathered together a number of the many county soil survey customers for a celebration of the update. County planners, agricultural representatives, legislators and others expressed their enthusiasm for this extremely useful planning tool. A digital version of the survey will be completed in 2002.

### **Essex County Soil Survey Being Digitized**

NRCS soil scientists have completed another 3,000 acres of mapping in Essex County to bring the total to 83,000 acres in just three years. This Progressive Soil Survey, done in cooperation with the Hudson-Essex-Passaic Soil Conservation District, State Soil Conservation Committee, and Essex County government, was completed in September 2001. With \$125,000 in funding provided by the New Jersey Legislature, the survey will be published both in hard print and in a digital format for access over the Internet. Soil surveys provide information on soil characteristics and capabilities to help people better understand soils and their use.

## **Conservation Programs**

### **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**

Through the NRCS-administered WHIP program, NRCS helped complete the development of conservation plans for a school wildlife site and a native grassland bird habitat in the townships of Mt. Olive and Harding. The school wildlife project will allow hundreds of children to interact with native plants in a new and unique way – by having an active role in their selection, planting, and care. The native grassland bird site will provide valuable nesting and feeding grounds for a state identified priority species. NRCS provided technical assistance for a wetland restoration design on public lands that was completed for Mendham Township. This project will increase the ability of the sites to accommodate a variety of wildlife species.

### **Soil Erosion and Stormwater Control Provided in Developing Areas**

The NJ Conservation Partnership helps growing communities protect their soil resources from erosion. Through the State Soil Conservation Committee’s erosion and sediment control regulatory program, the Soil Conservation Districts serving District 11 review and certify proposed development plans for soil erosion control before and after construction. They also review plans for stormwater control and issue permits. Local inspectors check compliance to ensure natural resource conservation on development sites.

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For more information about these and other conservation issues in the 11th District, contact the Hudson-Essex-Passaic SCD: (973) 364-0786; Morris County SCD: (973) 285-2953; Somerset-Union SCD: (908) 526-2701; Sussex County SCD: (973) 579-5074 or NRCS Frenchtown Service Center: (908) 782-4614; NRCS Hackettstown Service Center: (908) 852-2576; NRCS Morris Plains UCAP Service Center: (973) 538-1552. State level contacts are the SSCC: (609) 292-5540; NJACD: (973) 398-2511; NRCS: (732) 246-1171.